

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7206

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, KS, JA
SUBJECT: KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: KOREAN-JAPANESE NEGOTIATIONS FOR RESOLUTION OF THEIR DIFFERENCES ON KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE ARE AT CRITICAL STAGE. BOTH SIDES HOPE FOR RESOLUTION OF REMAINING ISSUES WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS.

1. I SPENT A STRENUOUS WEEKEND IN PUSAN WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KIM YONG-SIK AND JAPANESE AMBASSADOR USHIROKU. THERE WERE EXTENDED DISCUSSIONS ON KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM WITH BOTH REPORTING TO ME AND USING ME AS A FOIL FOR THEIR IDEAS.

2. AT THIS POINT ALL THAT REMAINS TO BE RESOLVED BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES IS THE QUESTION OF WHAT TO DO WITH KIM DONG-UN, WHOM THE JAPANESE HAVE IDENTIFIED AS BEING INVOLVED IN THE ABDUCTION. KIM TAE-CHUNG HAS BEEN FREED FROM HOUSE ARREST AND FOREIGN MINISTER KIM HAS ASSURED USHIROKU HE WILL NOT BE TRIED. WITHOUT SETTING A DATE, KOREANS HAVE AGREED TO WITHDRAW THEIR AMBASSADOR TO TOKYO AT SOME LATER STAGE BUT WITHOUT DIRECT ATTRIBUTION TO THE KIM CASE. PRIME MINISTER KIM JONG-PIL IS STANDING BY TO VISIT

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TOKYO FOR A MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER TANAKA AT WHICH HE WILL PRESENT KOREAN REGRETS IN THE FORM OF A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT PARK. KOREANS HAVE OFFERED TO MEET THE PRIME MINISTER ANY TIME BETWEEN OCTOBER 31 AND NOVEMBER 2.

3. USHIROKU SAID JAPANESE WERE NOT SATISFIED WITH KOREAN FORMULA FOR HANDLING KIM DONG-UN'S PUNISHMENT. AFTER SOME BACK-AND-FORTH DISCUSSION, KOREANS WERE WILLING TO SPEAK OF KIM DONG-UN BEING QUOTE SUSPECT UNQUOTE AND THEREFORE TO BE DEALT WITH THROUGH NORMAL LEGAL PROCEDURES. JAPANESE, WHILE NO LONGER REQUIRING

ADMISSION OF QUOTE CULPABILITY UNQUOTE, WISH AT LEAST TO HAVE IT

MADE CLEAR THAT KOREANS ACCEPT KIM DONG-UN'S QUOTE INVOLVEMENT UNQUOTE IN THE ABDUCTION. KOREAN COUNTERARGUMENT IS BASED UPON UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT KIM'S GUILT BEFORE TRIAL. I ASKED IF THERE COULD NOT BE SOME PRIOR UNDERSTANDING THAT KIM DONG-UN WOULD BE TRIED AND HAVE THE FEELING SOME MOVEMENT IN THAT DIRECTION MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER KIM BELIEVES THAT JAPANESE DESIRE TO SETTLE THE MATTER BEFORE DIET CONVENES NEXT WEEK IS WORKING IN KOREAN FAVOR. HE ALSO IS DEPENDING HEAVILY UPON KOREAN WILLINGNESS TO SEND THE PRIME MINISTER FOR EXPRESSION OF REGRETS, WHICH HE BELIEVES WILL GO LONG WAY TO MEETING TANAKA'S POLITICAL NEEDS NOW THAT KIM TAE-CHUNG HAS BEEN FREED FROM HOUSE ARREST. USHIROKU, ON THE OTHER HAND, SPOKE TO ME OF DIFFICULTY OF GETTING JAPANESE FOREIGN OFFICE TO WITHDRAW ITS DEMAND FOR PRIOR ADMISSION BY KOREANS OF KIM DONG-UN'S INVOLVEMENT. HE HAS COMMUNICATED THIS PAST WEEKEND'S EXCHANGES TO TOKYO AND IS AWAITING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS WHICH HE HOPES WILL ALLOW HIM TO WIND UP THE MATTER IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO. FOREIGN MINISTER KIM BELIEVES THE NEXT FORTY-EIGHT HOURS IS CRUCIAL AND EXPECTS THE REMAINING POINT TO BE SETTLED ON TERMS ACCEPTABLE TO KOREANS.
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